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BY

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BORDENTOWN, NEW JERSEY.

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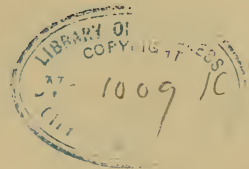
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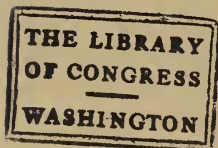


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THOMAS KELLY,
17 BARCLAY STREET.

[1877]

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PREFACE.

“PROPERTY is made for man, and not man for property.”

It is on this axiom that we base our present movement, which is directed—not against property or its rights—but against the abuse of those rights.

When Madame Roland said, as, passing to her doom, she looked up at the statue of Liberty, “Oh, Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in thy name!” it was not because she loved or revered liberty the less; it was against the abuses perpetrated under its ensign that she protested. So now do we protest against the system which has turned an institution that was founded for the well-being of the greater number, and of the most industrious classes, into a mere instrument for the benefit of the smallest number and of the idlest class in society.

The idea that property is so sacred a thing in itself that its rights must not be infringed upon, even to prevent the decay and death of a nation, is not an idea that is to be found in law, or in jurisprudence, or in political economy, or in ethics, or in the Bible. The precise contrary of this idea is inculcated in all the leading works of political economy, from Adam Smith up, and also by the principal writers on law and jurisprudence. I need not say anything about the Bible, for one of the most notorious outcries of the freethinkers of the present day against the teachings of the Gospel is, that they are rank communism, and that our Lord was utterly ignorant of political economy in all its branches.

The idea therefore of the divine rights of property has had its growth, not amongst educated minds, but amongst what I must call, for want of a better term, the “*uneducated section*” of the upper classes. These are some of them property holders. Some

of them own no property except debts; but both kinds are alike ignorant. They have heard from babyhood up that the world exists but for them and the rest of fashionable society. They have heard that all the outside world is "rabble." If they possess property, they believe it is their own innate superiority that has placed it in their hands. If they don't possess it, why, they believe they will soon get it by a rich marriage, or by some lucky haul in Wall street, or by some legacy from an apoplectic uncle. In any case, property, once theirs, brings no duties with it, and may be used as seemeth good unto their eyes.

When I say that this section of the upper classes is uneducated and ignorant, I do not mean to say that they do not know how to read or write, or that they have not, once upon a time, learned enough about history to know that there was once a man named George Washington, who ruined the country by separating it from England; but I mean that their minds are wholly undeveloped, that their powers of reasoning are in an embryo condition, that they have never had any intellectual training, and that they worship one God, and that God is their Class. Gentlemen and cads is their division of the world. For the million or so of "gentlemen," everything. For the fifty millions of cads, nothing. Such persons are always very rampant in opposition to all reforms. Their influence, however, is limited to a certain portion of the press, and to a portion of fashionable society. It is upheld for a time by the vaporings of the mighty army of toadies, who surround the charmed inclosure of high life, and leave no stone unturned to gain ever so slight a footing therein. In England, when a man has retired from some plebeian occupation, his first care is to get a hanging-on-place on the outer rail of high society. To do this he joins the Tories, and becomes more Tory than the Tories themselves. We see precisely the same thing under changed conditions here. A few ignorant or selfish persons belonging to the "upper crust," a few newspapers who are the toadies of these persons, and a great number of would-be aristocrats—such is the poor material of which the opposition to reforms in favor of the masses is usually composed. From such antagonists we have nothing to fear.

We hold that there is no such thing as absolute property in land. Many people go farther, and say that there is no such thing as property in land at all—that land cannot be bought and sold, because no man has a right to anything in it except what he produces. Obviously, if we adopted this theory, we should not hold that landlords should be compensated for their land, nor that it should be made as easy to buy and sell a piece of land as if it were a bale of cotton, nor that a farmer's proprietary should be established. We do, however, uphold these things, because we think they are the only practical notions for our present state of society, because the adoption of the communal system of land, whether it be in itself good or bad, could not be accomplished without the most tremendous revolution that has ever taken place in the world, and because, leaving opinions aside, a farmer's proprietary has been found to work well—quite well enough for any country—and we think it is a good thing to leave well alone. I would suggest in connection with this that the Prussian system of issuing bonds to the landlords would be far better than paying them in cash, and that of course the credit of the English government being so good, it ought not to be necessary for the Irish peasant to pay nearly as much interest as the German peasant was obliged to do.

CHAS. STEWART PARNELL.

THE HOVELS OF IRELAND.

“UPON the question, What is the worst bread which is eaten? one answered, in the respect of the coarseness thereof, bread made of beans. Another said, bread made of acorns. But the third hit the truth and said, bread taken out of other men’s mouths, who are the proprietors thereof.”

It is a fact well known to everybody that for many years great misery has existed in a chronic form amongst the agricultural classes of Ireland. The laborer has been but a hair’s-breadth better off than the pig he feeds on the refuse he himself finds it impossible to eat, and the farmer has been but a hair’s-breadth better off than the laborer he employs. Hopeless, voiceless poverty, whose only care has been to save by every imaginable kind of stinting a few pennies to educate the children of the hovel, and to contribute to the support of the peasant’s only consolation—his religion—has been the lot for generations upon generations of the great mass of Ireland’s population.

Until lately, however, this poverty, frightful as it is, has excited but little sympathy even amongst the most liberal nations, and amongst the people that rule Ireland, and are consequently responsible for her condition, it has met chiefly with contemptuous sneers, and the assertion, repeated so often and so loudly that England has induced almost every other country under the sun to believe it, that the whole root of the evil lay in the Irish character, in the natural inferiority of the Celt to the Anglo-Saxon, in the utter incapacity for progress, and

the hopeless inability to help themselves, improve themselves, or govern themselves, inherent in this unfortunate race.

Now it is an unhappy fact in human nature, that if any individual or people, who by a combination of certain qualities of hardness, toughness, selfishness, and thorough unscrupulousness, has achieved showy material successes, only insists positively enough, and blatantly enough, that the sky is black and not blue, and that the sun is the source of darkness and not of light, presently, one by one, every other individual or people begins to think that there must be something in it, or such a successful, and consequently superior, individual or people would not proclaim it so incessantly ; and the calumniated sky and sun having only facts in their favor, and those counting for little against assertions when made by certain distinguished beings, it will soon become an article of universal belief that the sky *is* black, and that the sun does *not* give light, and a black cloud passing across the sky, or a spot in the sun, will be pointed to as incontestable proofs of the theory.

Of similar nature has been the immeasurable twaddle talked about the causes of Irish poverty, the nature of the Irish character, the radical difference between Celt and Saxon—no doubt existing, but a difference of kind and not of degree—and finally the ineradicable tendencies of the Irish to crime and pauperism. In this enlightened country, where, however, the majority of the inhabitants are Anglo-Saxons, and therefore think and judge as Anglo-Saxons do, I have, with a few honorable exceptions, as from the lips of a man like Wendell Phillips, seldom heard an opinion expressed upon the condition of Ireland which could lead me to hope that a glimmer of the truth had entered the mind of the speaker ; while in some cases, I regret to say, the opinion was con-

veyed in such language as showed that the speaker, from the prejudices of education, or perhaps from religious bigotry, did not even wish to know the real state of affairs, for fear of some of his pet theories on the subject of race or religion being thereby disturbed. But theories, instilled in our childhood by pastors and masters, have ever been, and ever will be, one of the great stumbling-blocks to progress, both individual and national. To many a man it would be like tearing body and soul asunder to force him to give up some fallacy, loved "not wisely, but too well," which, like the poison plant in Hawthorne's wonderful tale, has grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, till his whole being is impregnated with its poison, and he feels that he can no longer live without the companion that is cramping to his intellect and deadly to his sympathies. The influence of such a bosom upas-plant America has seen on a gigantic scale when many of her best and greatest men arrayed themselves in favor of slavery—when in the heart of Boston, the most liberal city in the world, Wendell Phillips was mobbed, and William Lloyd Garrison compelled to fly for his life from an aristocratic rabble headed by Edward Everett. An almost equally virulent influence is seen now at work, when many good people are wishing the evil days of Grantism back again, eager to see the sorely punished South crushed down once more under the slavery of military force and carpet-bagism. Mr. Herbert Spencer has well illustrated the fatal effects of all the various "biases" we cherish and nourish, in his study of sociology, and he shows the root of all true liberal-mindedness in his "Illustrations of Universal Progress," when he pens these ever-memorable words: "To the true reformer no institution is sacred, no belief above criticism. Everything shall conform itself to equity and reason. Nothing shall be saved by its prestige." Any

liberalism that professes less than this is spurious. You can no more have a "moderate" liberal than you can have a moderately honest man or a moderately virtuous woman.

But, unhappily, it is in contest with this very moderate liberalism, or "conservative liberalism," as it loves to call itself, meaning thereby conservative of certain favorite lies, that the heart of the single-eyed truth-seeker grows sore. One timid soldier that is with us does more harm in demoralizing the courageous and creating confusion in the ranks than fifty enemies in front of us on the field. Justin McCarthy tells us, in his "History of our Own Times," how much of the difficulty in the way of the Anti-Corn-Law men came from their Whig friends who wanted to be moderate. He tells us how Mr. Macaulay, who professed to think with Bright and Cobden, and who did really think with them as soon as it became evident that their cause was going to be successful, wrote to his constituents thus: "In my opinion you are all wrong—not because you think all protection bad, for I think so too; not even because you avow your opinion and attempt to propagate it, for I have always done the same, and shall do the same; but because, being in a situation where your only hope is in a compromise, you refuse to hear of compromise; because, being in a situation where every person who will go a step with you on the right road ought to be cordially welcomed, you drive from you those who are willing and desirous to go with you half way. To this policy I will be no party." So, too, during the long and hope-sickening struggle for Catholic Emancipation in Ireland, who were the people that contributed most to thwart the efforts and damp the ardor of the brave and true reformers? Who but the half-a-loaf-is-better-than-no-bread men, the men of compromise, the men of moderation? Had these had their weak-minded

way, Ireland might still be writhing with one arm caught in the cleft of Catholic Disabilities, a prey to the twin wolves of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Irish greed, as she was before the days of O'Connell. Space would fail me if I were to point out one-thousandth part of the instances, of which history is full, of the evils of an inopportune spirit of compromise when great rights are at stake ; but any one who has been a foe to slavery in the days when it was rampant, will remember how abortive all efforts at compromise were, on that question, between North and South, and how each feeble attempt only opened the way yet wider for the disaster in the midst of which the seemingly irremovable iniquity was finally swept from the face of the earth.

Coming back to the particular wrongs of which I wish to speak—first, the wrong of English rule, as it exists in Ireland ; secondly, the wrong of landlord rule, as it exists in Ireland—I have found, as far as my own experience goes, that the most insidious and most discouraging opponents I have had to deal with in argument in this country have been those who have begun by announcing themselves as holders of liberal views on all subjects, but at the same time as standing on a higher plane than flighty Radicals like John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. John Bright, in their secret opinion, though it may be an opinion of which they themselves are only dimly conscious, has atoned for being a Radical by having been once a member of the English cabinet. M. Gambetta finds his justification for his democratic career in the fact that he is now President of the Chamber of Deputies, and will one day probably be President of France, and also partly in the fact that he makes war against the Jesuits—action which always finds favor in the eyes of the class of Liberals of whom I speak, who are generally Protestants first, and Christians afterwards. But what

is there to be said for the striving, fighting soldier in the ranks of the present day, the Radical who has not yet been successful, who has nothing but scars for the past, wounds and bruises for the present, vague hopes for the future to show—no decorations, nor badges, nor trophies? the man whose birth perhaps is low, whose family nowhere, who has to earn his living in the few hours of leisure he can snatch from his labors for reform? Fie on the Plebeian, with his provincial dialect, or his Scotch or Irish brogue! What terrible things are not whispered about him? That he once worked as a mechanic, or perhaps even as a day-laborer! Does the world of fashion receive him? Do the gentry and aristocracy support his principles? No; then let him by all means be suppressed as quickly as possible; he is a danger to society. I remember well the time when no respectable person dared so much as mention the name of Gambetta in a respectable French salon. To mention it with any approach to praising or defending him would have entailed social ostracism. When Joseph Arch, the land reformer, began his agitation in England, bishops and squires vied with each other in writing to the newspapers, suggesting summary modes of punishment to be inflicted on this dangerous fellow, such as duckings in horse-ponds, and so forth. O'Connell and John Bright, in the days of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation, shared between them every epithet of opprobrium that liberal and conservative newspapers alike could find to hurl at their heads. So nowadays the land reformers who head the present agitation in Ireland are denounced as endeavoring to excite an agrarian rebellion, because one or two fools, in a crowd of twenty thousand farmers, cry out for shooting landlords. So the same old story is ever repeated; the same abusive language is showered on the head of every leader of every new reform; the same combination of stolid conservatives, timid

liberalists and Laodicean "moderates," who like to be called reformers, but do not want to do anything or risk anything in support of their professed principles, is formed from age to age against the small phalanx of single-minded men, enthusiasts if you will, who have accomplished everything with any good in it, ever since the world began. Only a few weeks ago a gentleman, a lawyer of intelligence, said to me, apropos of the land question in Ireland: "Are any of your family land-owners?" I replied in the affirmative. "Then," he said, with an air of astonishment, not to say suspicion, "why do you and your family support the radical view of the land question?" I said—the only thing I could say—"Because we respect the laws of justice, and feel that it will be better for us in the end to follow them, though it may apparently be to our disadvantage now." The look of astonishment on his face deepened, and I said no more; but I might have answered him in the words of Montalembert in his "Monks of the West," "We are often asked what is the disposition upon which every guaranty of order, of security, and of independence invented by political wisdom is founded? What is the virtue, without which all these guaranties are ridiculous? It is, undoubtedly, that moral energy which inspires men with the ability and the desire to oppose themselves to injustice, to protest against the abuse of power, even when this injustice and this abuse do not directly affect themselves." In America it is too often the case that it cannot be understood why a man should support a principle or advocate a reform based on abstract justice, unless he has himself an "axe to grind."

The above is only one specimen amongst many of the species of minds in which the reformer meets his worst foes—minds unable to conceive of any motives higher than those of self-interest in some shape or other. They

doubt either the sincerity or the common-sense of any one professing to be guided by disinterested considerations. "A man," said an acquaintance to me the other day, in allusion to one of our Irish members of Parliament, who spends his money freely for the Nationalist cause, "a man who spends one-fifth of his income on himself, and the other four-fifths on an idea, is a lunatic, and should be put in an asylum." Happily for the world there have been, from time to time, people in it who were not of this gentleman's way of thinking, or we should still be savages burrowing each one in his own hole in the ground, and sallying forth each one only to club his neighbor, who might be trying to secure the biggest fruit on the tree, or the most succulent roots in the earth; but such principles, relics of our days of naked barbarism, yet survive under the respectable names of "practical sense," "every-day wisdom," and so forth, in the minds of myriads of estimable people.

To return to my subject, however, it has been a matter of continual amazement to me to see how, on coming down to the concrete in Irish questions, the most puerile objections are invariably urged against arguments that have stood the brunt of thousands of years—ever since man had a history, in fact—and the most childish questions are asked, showing the densest ignorance, not only of Irish and English history, but of all history, by persons setting themselves up as judges on all points of conflict between England and Ireland, and delivering themselves of those questions with the air of having forever silenced their opponents thereby. One of the most stereotyped questions, the inevitable question, in fact, supposed to be unanswerable, is, "Why should not Ireland be as content to remain united with England as Scotland is?" This question needs only a perusal of the leading facts of Irish history for its answer. It is about as rea-

sonable a question as if one were to ask, "Since a black cat and a tabby cat can get on very well together, why should not a cat and mouse?" It is not the aim of this pamphlet, however, to answer the question. Any one who takes the trouble to study the impartial pages of Lecky, in his "England in the Eighteenth Century," can find out for himself all the reasons for Scotland's contentedness and Ireland's discontentedness; but there is another stereotyped interrogatory, with which I propose to occupy myself now, and that one runs thus: "How is it that the farmers of Ireland are so miserable, while the farmers of England, with precisely the same system of land tenure, are so prosperous?" The equally stereotyped answer which the propounders of this question make to themselves, and one which no amount of reasoning or proof will drive out of their Protestant and Anglo-Saxon heads, is, "Because the Irish farmers are Celts and Roman Catholics, and therefore have all the vices; and the English farmers are Anglo-Saxons and Protestants, and therefore have all the virtues."

The stern logic of recent events has now in a great measure answered this question, as history always answers every question if it is only given time enough. It has answered it, too, in a very different manner from what the above-mentioned reasoners would have expected. Distress has spread to England. The agricultural laborers have become paupers; the farmers are fast becoming so too. Many have given up their farms, unable to make a living off them; many have left the country to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Everywhere the standard of comfort has been lowered, till it threatens to approach that of the Irish peasant, and an emigration movement is on foot which may assume gigantic proportions during the next few years. A little competition from owners of free land, a couple of poor harvests, and the English land system

has toppled over, and threatens to overwhelm country gentry, farmers, and laborers alike in its ruins. We have seen only the beginning of agricultural distress in England; as the farmers have been the last to feel the pressure of hard times, so they will be the last to recover; and while good harvests may operate as a check on the advancing distress, they will only operate as a drag does on a carriage going down hill. The bottom of the hill will be assuredly reached at last, and the future of the English farmer, and therefore of England itself, will then depend upon whether the English gentry, like their prototypes, the French Legitimists, will still remain unable to learn anything or to forget anything, or whether some new John Bright or Richard Cobden will be able to squeeze from their necessities what their sense of justice would never have yielded. It is amusing, or would be so, were it not for the frightful suffering entailed on the poor by such selfish blunders on the part of the legislating classes, to hear how the voices of the landed proprietors are being gradually raised again for protection, under the thin disguise of reciprocity. "Starve the people, but keep our pockets filled," is their cry, and such has been the cry of a landed aristocracy in every age and every part of the world, with everywhere the same results. Crime, fever, famine, degradation almost to the level of beasts, for the victims, the toiling masses,—then, when time was ripe, revolution, bloodshed, and destruction for the oppressors—they who had sowed the wind reaping the whirlwind at last,—and this I will ask, when Nemesis strikes, who shall blame overmuch the tools she uses, whether they be Bohemian peasants, or French Jacobins, or German Communists, or Russian Nihilists, or Irish Ribbonmen, or English Chartists? The last friend of the people is Sansculottism, the avenger. "Wherefore," says Carlyle, "let all men know what of depth

and of height is still revealed in man ; and, with fear and wonder, with just sympathy and just antipathy, with clear eye and open heart, contemplate it and appropriate it ; and draw innumerable inferences from it. This inference, for example, among the first : That, ‘if the gods of this lower world will sit on their glittering thrones, indolent as Epicurus’ gods, with the living chaos of ignorance and hunger weltering uncared-for at their feet, and smooth parasites preaching, peace, peace, when there is no peace,’ then the dark chaos, it would seem, will rise—has risen—and O Heavens ! has it not tanned their skins into breeches for itself ? That there be no second Sansculottism in our earth for a thousand years, let us understand well what the first was ; and let rich and poor of us go and do OTHERWISE.”

It is not my intention here to dilate on English poverty and its consequences ; what I wish to draw attention to, in speaking of the condition into which England is falling, is simply the fact that only since the English farmers began to lift up their voices and form tenant-right leagues, with, as yet, far less cause for doing so than the Irish farmers have had for two hundred years, has the world in general begun to admit the folly of the British land system, and tardily to acknowledge that character alone will not make a man rich and thriving, unless the laws of his land are such as leave him free to employ his faculties to the best advantage, and moreover secure to him the enjoyment of his profits after he has earned them. The land-laws have never done this either in England or in Ireland ; but the reason the English farmer, as long as he was not subjected to any stress of competition, has suffered so much less hitherto than the Irish farmer, lies not in the superiority of his character, but in the political history of his country. I am not one of those who think it a wise thing that Ireland should be forever

dwelling on past grievances—ever repeating the story of the persecutions she has undergone since the days of Queen Elizabeth ; not because these grievances have not been of the most terrible nature it is possible for the mind of man to conceive ; not because these persecutions have not almost cast in the shade all persecutions of Protestants by Roman Catholics ; not because Ireland's wrongs can ever be forgiven by Ireland, except on the sole condition of the full restoration of her national autonomy, but because it seems to me that there are enough grievances in the present to occupy our whole attention, and that to dwell on past injustices, to the exclusion of existing ones, is to give the world cause to imagine that the memory of the past forms Ireland's whole stock-in-trade for her complaints, and that the roseate present is only marred by a spiteful brooding over events that the present generation of her English rulers are not to blame for, and have, as indeed they loudly assert, done everything they could to remedy. Such a view I have found readily adopted everywhere, and it is time that our Irish public men should cease to dilate on the crimes England committed when she could plead semi-barbarism as her excuse, and should instead bring before the notice of the world those she commits now that she claims to be wholly civilized. It is true that the word crime may seem strong when applied to those features of English rule which are at present most notable for their injustice, such as, to mention a few, the discrimination between Catholics and Protestants in the matter of higher education ; the inequality of the franchise between England and Ireland, whereby a large class of property holders who have votes in England are disfranchised in Ireland ; the corrupt and demoralizing government of "the Castle ;" the disproportionately heavy taxation of Ireland, comparing its collective wealth with that of England and Scotland ; the im-

mense military constabulary kept up all over the country, in addition to the garrisons of soldiers, so that last year there were three thousand more policemen in Ireland than there were criminals; the system of packing juries and trying political cases by judges in the pay of the Crown, thereby causing the scandals so frequent in election times; of members of Parliament, elected by immense majorities, being unseated on petition, in order to put in candidates supporting the Government; and lastly, that which has above all things wrought the most evil in Ireland, the steady, remorseless, all-pervading system of postponing Catholics to Protestants, Celts to Saxons, the great bulk of the nation to a few hundred thousand colonists from England, in order to keep up by artificial means the Protestant ascendancy, which, left to the force of nature, would long ago have given up the ghost. This method of the English Government leavens the whole mass of society in Ireland; wherever it is possible to prefer a Protestant to a Catholic, the preference is given, quite irrespective of any other considerations. Irish Catholics, in their own country, suffer at this day a kind of ostracism—political, civil, and social—the higher classes as well as the lower, in favor of a small number of men, secure in the possession of confiscated estates, and spending the money they draw from these estates in England, on the Continent, in America, anywhere and on anything but for the benefit of Ireland. As I said before, it may seem strong language to call these things crimes, but the effects they have produced on the country are so terrible that a less harsh term would be inadequate to convey a sense of the reprobation which such abuses should excite—which they would excite, were they not persistently glossed over by English writers and speakers, the only authorities on Irish questions that most persons think it necessary to consult.

Not only the poverty, however, but the demoralization of the whole Irish people is due to these abuses, and to the many others which the fears of the English have from time to time compelled them to remove. Yet, though these latter have happily become matters of history, the evil they have done lives after them, and it is certainly not wonderful that a nation which up to the time of Gladstone's Land and Church Acts was nothing in the world but a nation of beggars starved by law, and of serfs enslaved by law, should not in nine years have developed all the characteristics of self-reliance and dignity which, amongst more fortunate nations, are the slow growth of centuries of independence. Of course I do not for an instant admit that there is truth in the calumnies hurled so recklessly at the heads of the Irish by people who are stirred up by political jealousy or by religious bigotry. With the statistics of our country* showing year by year that it is freer from serious crime than any other country in the world, we can afford to smile at the charge so frequently made that we Irish are noted for our criminal propensities. In America, while the Irish are certainly somewhat prominent in minor offenses, committed usually under the influence of drink, a careful study of the police-court records does not show that the majority of murders and burglaries are committed by the Irish. There is another nationality which holds a bad pre-eminence in America as regards all these graver offenses. The truth is, however, that when a crime is committed by an Irishman, special attention is at once drawn to it by all the newspaper organs of that party which does not happen to be supported by the Irish vote at the time, and the isolated offense is made the foundation of a sweeping indictment against the whole race.

* See Dr. Hancock's Criminal Statistics for Great Britain.

This is done, not so much out of real antipathy to the Irish, but in order to discredit the party which is sustained by their vote. The Irish are not without blame in the matter, however. As long as, deluded by the lavish promises of office which are given before an election, promises which, it stands to reason, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, cannot be fulfilled, they vote stolidly and solidly for one political party, like a huge herd of sheep, they must expect that the other party, hopeless of gaining their support, will take no trouble either to conciliate them or do them justice, and will content itself with the small revenge of calling them names, while the party they do vote for, sure of being able to hoodwink them with promises when the time comes, regards them with that contempt which we all feel for creatures that we think we have just under our thumbs. A little independence on the part of the Irish voter would do more to raise his status in this country than the most immaculate behavior in points of morals. One party would no longer venture to revile him; the other party could no longer afford to despise him.

While saying thus much in defense of the Irish, against the wholesale accusations framed against them by Know-Nothings and by persons who take all their opinions from the newspapers—and I might say a great deal more, but this would not be the place for it—it is, unhappily, impossible to deny that the abnormal political system in Ireland has produced a deep demoralization of a kind from which a nation recovers far less easily than from a temporary epidemic of crime or immorality. England has at several periods passed through such epidemics, and has recovered from them; but in Ireland there is a national hebetude, a deadly stupor, pervading the whole country, which makes of every man a desponding Rip Van Winkle, and which, as in an individual, so

in a nation, must at all hazards be put a stop to, or death will ensue. The absence of serious crime is attributable to the religious influences to which the people are subject, but this deeper evil religion does not touch. Only those who have lived a long time in Ireland, and seen much, not only of the peasants and workingmen, but of the tradesmen, the merchants, the professional men, the literary men, and even the landed gentry themselves, can have an idea of the utter hopelessness, the utter indifference toward the future, the rooted despair which underlie all the reckless jollity of the Irish manner. From the highest to the lowest one hears the same tale. There is nothing to be done in Ireland, no money to be made there, no chance of bettering one's self or any one else. The Irish lawyer must needs go to the English bar to make money; the Irish artist must sell his works in London; the Irish capitalist invests his capital abroad, because there are no enterprises in Ireland to put it into; the Irish tradesman drags along a painful hand-to-mouth existence, on the verge of bankruptcy all the time; the Irish landlord spends his money everywhere except in his own country, because there is no society there brilliant enough for his tastes, and because he likes to get away as far as possible from the sight of the misery around him, which disturbs his nerves, though it does not disturb his conscience; the Irish farmer—well, we know what his condition is, and also what that of the day-laborer is, on a magnificent salary of from seven to ten shillings per week, and we know how the power of arbitrary rent-raising, in a community where the competition for land is altogether abnormal, and not subject to the same checks as it is in other communities, has rendered the land-tiller spiritless and despairing, with no standard of comfort, no ambition to better himself, no desire to render more productive the ground he culti-

vates, for that, in his case, would only mean increased rent as his reward.

In judging of the effects of landlordism in Ireland there are two truths in political economy to be borne in mind. The first is, that the reason the evils of the landlord system have not been felt acutely until recently in a country like England, is to be found in the fact that industry and enterprise of every sort, untrammelled by hostile legislation from aliens, have been so flourishing that no large class of the population has been at any time thrown on agriculture for its sole subsistence. There being numberless gates open for the labor, the brains, or the money of an individual, no one would rent land unless he was sure of obtaining from it a rate of remuneration similar to what he would obtain in any other employment for which he was fitted ; and having rented land, no one would invest money in improving it unless he was sure of a rate of profit equal to the general rate of profits to be obtained in other industries. This, of course, always acted as a natural check on the raising of rents, for if the landlord attempted to raise his rent beyond what the price of produce and the cost of farming warranted, the tenant had but to throw up his farm and devote his labor or his capital to some other kind of business. Not, of course, that this was always easy, but it was always at least practicable, and the effect has been, as I have said, that until within the last few years the rents in England have been at no time exorbitantly high, and the farmer has therefore lived at peace with his landlord. Contrast with this the situation of the Irish farmer. A long series of iniquitous laws, which any one who chooses may make himself acquainted with in any history of Ireland, have crushed out the industries and manufactures of the country, from its woolen and linen trades even down to its mining industries. It is true that most of the prohibi-

tions placed on every branch of trade have been removed, but it will take many years of diligent fostering and liberal pecuniary aid from the Government, such as is bestowed freely on Scotch industries, but which Ireland unfortunately does not seem likely to get, to repair the mischief which has been done. Even now, Ireland suffers from certain unreasonable prohibitions made in the interest of English revenues. The cultivation of tobacco, to which her soil and climate are peculiarly adapted, is forbidden by law, and, though it is also forbidden in England, as tobacco would not grow under any circumstances in the latter country, this prohibition is no hardship to the English, while it cuts off a fruitful source of wealth in Ireland. The germinating of wheat is also forbidden to Irish farmers, and while the fear of illicit distilling is made the pretext, it is not forbidden to English and Scotch farmers, amongst whom illicit distilling also prevails, especially amongst the latter. The jealousy of English manufacturers is ever on the alert, just as much as it was seventy or eighty years ago, to nip in the bud all Irish enterprises. If a factory is started in Ireland, an English company at once steps in, buys it out, and then—quietly shuts it up. With the present small minority of Irish members in the House of Commons, systematically voted down by an immense majority of English and Scotch members leagued against them, there is always danger that the influence in Parliament would be sufficient to force through it some form of hostile legislation to crush any rising industry in Ireland that promised well and excited the fears of English manufacturers. Ireland will never be safe from such legislation till she has her own parliament, and till then, the risk attending the investment of capital in Irish enterprises, both from the natural discontent and rebellious feeling in a country that is governed against its will, and held down in the

position of a mere province when it ought to be a nation, and from the danger of this unfriendly legislation, will be too great to allow money to be drawn out which can be invested elsewhere with so much greater safety.

From these causes, therefore, it results that the Irish tenant farmer, if he gives up his land, has nowhere to turn for a living. He has had no means of acquiring a capital, and such few avenues of labor as exist are already choked up. Emigration and the poor-house are his alternatives; what wonder if he sometimes resorts to assassination as a third alternative? It is true, agrarian murders have been very rare for the past nine years, showing that even such slight amelioration in the condition of the peasant as was effected by Gladstone's Land Act has made his patient nature still more patient and long-suffering. It is a fact, which every agrarian crime committed of late years proves, that, with the exception of some Ribbon outrages during the worst days of Ribbonism, the Irish peasant does not assassinate save when driven to the direst extremity. Murder, of course, is never defensible, but there are "extenuating circumstances" in these agrarian murders which it is a duty to point out when they are made the basis of a sweeping attack on a whole people.

I will quote here Professor Fawcett's remarks on the subject of the Irish tenantry, or, as he justly calls them, cottiers, for the majority are only cottiers, *i. e.*, adopting his definition of the word, tenants possessing no capital. I refer the reader to the chapter on Metayers and Cottiers and economic aspects of tenant-right, in the "Manual of Political Economy." Professor Fawcett's object is to show how inferior the position of the Irish tenant is, both to that of the metayer tenant on the continent, and the rack-rent tenant in England. The italics are my own.

"The cottier tenure," he says, "has existed on a far

more extended scale in Ireland than in any other country, for before the famine of 1848 nearly the whole of the land in Ireland was cultivated by cottiers, and even at the present time they occupy a very considerable portion of it. The cottiers of Ireland may be described as peasant cultivators; for they rent the land directly from the landlord, and cultivate it by their own labor. The produce of the land is therefore, as in the case of the metayer tenure, entirely divided between the landlord and the cultivator; but there is a fundamental difference between the metayer and the cottier tenure. The rent which the metayer pays is definitely fixed by custom; on the other hand, the rent which the cottier pays is entirely regulated by competition. Custom also generally gives to the metayer fixity of tenure, but no such fixity of tenure can be claimed by cottiers; they compete against each other for the possession of a plot of land, and the landlord is only anxious to obtain those tenants who will give him the highest rents. Now the rack-rents, which are paid by the large capitalist farmers in England, are regulated by competition, and it may therefore be asked—can there be any essential difference between rack-rents and cottier rents? There is this essential and very important difference; a rack-rent is determined by the *competition of capitalists*, whereas a cottier-rent is determined by the competition of laborers. The consequences of this distinction we will proceed to explain. When farmers apply large capitals, as in England, to cultivate their farms, they expect to obtain the ordinary rate of profit for their capital, and a reasonable remuneration for their labor of superintendence; it is therefore quite impossible that the rent paid by English farmers could long continue so high as to prevent the ordinary rate of profit being received, for if this were so, capital would not continue to be invested in farming, but would inevit-

ably be applied in other employments, where the ordinary rate of profit could be secured. Rack-rents, therefore, are kept as it were in a position of stable equilibrium by the competition of capital, for competition of capital signifies that men are eagerly anxious to invest their capital to the greatest possible advantage; and consequently, a rack-rent is in this matter so adjusted that farming is neither much more nor much less profitable than any other occupation. In the case, however, of a cottier tenancy, it is population, and not capital, which competes for the land. The Irish cottiers, for instance, are miserably poor peasants, who possess no capital except one or two tools and the scanty furniture of their wretched hovels. When, therefore, they compete for a plot of land, it is absurd to suppose that they calculate the rent which they are willing to pay, by considering whether their capital would secure a higher rate of profit in some other investment; they are themselves fit for no other employment, and all the capital they possess would scarcely realize more than a nominal sum.

“To a cottier the possession of a plot of land is not a question of profit, but of subsistence, and consequently, in any district, the more numerous is the peasantry the more actively will the land be competed for. *The peasantry of Ireland were so long accustomed to poverty* that they were satisfied if they could occupy a plot of ground, and obtain from it just sufficient food to provide a bare subsistence; they had no habitual standard of comfort; every adult peasant married, and a want of food, with its consequent diseases, was the only check upon population. Such being the condition of the Irish peasantry, it may be naturally supposed that cottier rents were forced up to their highest possible point; the cottier could only obtain just sufficient to live upon, and the whole remaining product was paid to the landlord as

rent. The pecuniary amount of these cottier rents may be regarded as merely nominal ; a peasant was so anxious to obtain a plot of ground that he cared not what rent he offered for it ; he well knew that the landlord, whatever was the nominal amount of rent, must leave him sufficient to live upon. And thus we learn, from the evidence taken before Lord Devon's Irish Poor Law Commission, *that the nominal amount of many of these cottier rents exceeded the whole produce which the land yielded, even in the most favorable season.* The cottier was consequently in constant arrears to his landlord ; the landlord had, of course, a legal right to distrain for the rent, but such remedy was of no value, for the whole property of the cottier was scarcely worth seizing. Neither could the landlord gain much by resorting to eviction, for the evicted tenant would only be replaced by another tenant of the same character, whose arrears of rent would accumulate with similar rapidity. Although eviction was the legal right of the landlord, yet *he was restrained from exercising this right by the powerful motive of personal safety.* Assassination not unfrequently punished an evicting landlord. The economic condition of no other country has ever been so unsatisfactory as was the condition of Ireland under the cottier tenancy, for the cottiers, having taken the land at a rent which it was impossible for them to pay, had no motive whatever to be industrious. If by skill and labor the land was rendered more productive, the increased produce was absorbed in the rent of the landlord. The rents were, in fact, fixed so high that whether the seasons were favorable or not, whether the land was well or badly cultivated, the cottier tenants could never expect to obtain for themselves any more than a bare subsistence ; hence it has been justly remarked, that the Irish cottiers were the only people in the world whose condition was so de-

plorable that they gained nothing by being industrious. No scheme could possibly be devised which would act more effectually to impoverish the people, and throw the land into the most wretched state of cultivation. The progress of Ireland cannot be marked by a surer sign than by the gradual abolition of the cottier tenure."

In this, on the whole, lucid and accurate description of the state of the Irish tenantry, Professor Fawcett makes, however, one or two mistakes which bear rather importantly on the conclusions to be deduced from the account he gives. First, he speaks of all this as if a great deal of it belonged to the past alone; but the fact is, the combined influences of the famine, the emigration to America, and Gladstone's Land Act have improved matters so little that everything is pretty much the same as it was before 1847, except that Ireland is now very much underpopulated, in itself a great evil in any country, and that vast areas of land, formerly under cultivation, have fallen out of cultivation. It is a curious fact, and one only to be explained by the continuance of bad laws and of a hated foreign government, with the political unrest which the latter naturally produces, that the immense diminution in the population since 1847 has neither had the effect of lessening to any appreciable extent the competition in land, nor of raising, except very slightly, the wages of the working classes. The industries of Ireland, never very flourishing, have grown less and less so since the famine; they have decreased with the decrease in the population, and, consequently, there being a diminished demand for labor, wages have not risen spite of the scarcity of laborers. The cottier tenure, moreover, exists still in all its worst features over by far the larger part of the country. The farmer is still, as a rule, one who cultivates the ground himself with the assistance of his family. Where the farms are larger in extent, he has, in

the busy season, one or two miserably paid laborers under him, but the essential fact that makes him a cottier tenant remains undisturbed, viz., that he possesses little or no capital, and, as Fawcett shows so well above, never can possess it. Gladstone's Land Act, it is true, provides compensation for unexhausted improvements when the tenant is evicted, provided they were made not more than twenty years previously, but as I shall show by some remarkable cases that took place in Ireland about two years ago, that compensation is often entirely inadequate and a mere mockery of the tenants; it provides compensation for disturbance, except in case of eviction for non-payment of rent, and thus puts a direct premium on the practice of arbitrary rent-raising, for as soon as the tenant, by dint of hard labor, is beginning to obtain more than a mere subsistence of the most frugal kind from his land, the landlord at once steps in and raises the rent, and the refusal or the inability to pay—the tenant having perhaps contracted debts, which he expected to pay off from the increased produce of his ground—puts the tenant outside the pale of compensation. Were the landlord deprived of the power of arbitrarily raising his rents, this provision in the Land Act would, of course, be perfectly just; as it is, it has caused more evictions than any amount of arrears of rents, and statistics unfortunately show that evictions have been steadily on the increase ever since the passing of the Land Act. Secondly, Mr. Fawcett makes an obvious error, natural perhaps to an Englishman, when he gives as one of the reasons why Irish peasants cannot resort to other means of obtaining a living, that "they are themselves fit for no other employment." The truth is that, owing to the dreadful condition of the country ever since the union, there has been no other employment for them. The simple spectacle of the enormous labors executed by the hands of these same

peasants in America—labors by which they have built up the country, and extended and established civilization everywhere on this immense continent—gives the lie to this thoroughly English assertion. As pioneers, miners, masons, mechanics, artisans, engineers, tradesmen, merchants, manufacturers, journalists, lawyers, physicians, orators, legislators, commanders of fleets and armies, governors of cities and states, and presidents, these despised Irish peasants and their offspring have shown for what employments they are fit, when they only “get a chance.”

Mr. Fawcett makes a third mistake when he says that the peasant “well knew that the landlord, whatever was the nominal amount of the rent, must leave him sufficient to live upon.” Unhappily, what was and is too often left the tenant is just enough to die slowly on. Every year, numerous deaths, attributable to nothing but slow starvation and the ravages of diseases brought on by the want of food, clothing and fuel, attest the fact that the peasant frequently cannot get enough out of his land, after the rent is paid, even to live upon. The English and many of the American newspapers are shouting out communism! incendiarism! because a speaker at a tenant-right meeting in Ireland, a short time ago, advised the farmers to pay only to their landlords as rent, what was left after they had fed and clothed themselves. Surely, when one considers the kind of food and clothing the Irish farmer is satisfied with, this would seem the most reasonable of propositions. But no! unless the tenant submits to the pangs of slow starvation, in order to pay his landlord’s rent, he is a communist and a robber! Is not this poor political economy, as well as poor Christianity? How can a nation be prosperous, when seven-tenths of it are starving? The laws of political economy promote the acquisition of wealth—how can

that be true political economy which promotes nothing but poverty?

Professor Fawcett says also that the landlord could find no remedy for non-payment of rent either in distraint or eviction. These are the words of a man who has had little practical acquaintance with the "realities of Irish life." So far from the landlord getting no relief by eviction, it has always been his direct interest, if he finds his rents low, to raise them as quickly as possible to the point at which, as Fawcett says, "they exceeded the whole produce which the land yielded, even in the most favorable seasons." The tenant being then, of course, utterly unable to pay, even though he starved himself to death to do so, the landlord at once had his excuse for doing what he had been aiming at all along, namely, evicting his tenant, and turning the farm into a sheep or cattle-walk. This paid him a higher rate of interest than having tenants, before the competition of American beef became so severe, and allowed him to dispense with the necessity of employing laborers, as he would have had to do had he undertaken to farm his land himself. After the famine this spectacle was seen on every side, and soon bore bloody fruit in the shape of Ribbonism. Then at last the fear of assassination caused the landlords to pause, but not till after three millions of people had been "exterminated," and their places filled with cattle. It is true, the thing still goes on, and of late years it has increased, owing to the fact that Ribbonism has completely died out, and agrarian outrages being very "few and far between," the landlords feel that they can evict with impunity. The wild spirit of revenge that blazed in the bosom of the Irish peasant in former less civilized days, has been quenched by advancing civilization and the extraordinarily rapid progress of education in Ireland during the last twenty years, but this check on evictions being

removed, it is all the more necessary that every form of legal coercion should be used in its place. Political agitation carried to its utmost constitutional extent, and the most unwearied efforts to awaken public opinion and the public conscience, are now more than ever necessary, or, spite of civilization, we can expect nothing but a relapse into the old barbarous methods of punishment inflicted on barbarous landlords. It is certain that if a few thousand landlords are to be allowed to evict and expatriate several millions of farmers, there must be some great radical blunder underlying the system which permits it, for "the greatest good of the greatest number" is one of the first principles of political economy, and here we have the law seeking, not the greatest good of the greatest number, but the greatest good of the smallest number, on true Conservative principles. "For empires or for individuals," says Carlyle, "there is but one class of men to be trembled at; and that is the stupid class, the class that cannot see, who, alas! are they mainly that will not see." And what if the stupid class be also the legislating class, the governing class, governing with regard alone for its own supposed interests, and a complete disregard for the good of the governed masses, with an ignorance that it does not care to correct, of what is necessary for that good, and with, to crown all, not merely an indifference, but a positive aversion toward those who are helpless under its rule, and who, in addition to being in a lower class in life, belong to a despised nationality, and hold fast to a detested religion?

The second truth in political economy, which it is essential to keep in view when dealing with the Irish land question, is this most important one, which I find, strange to say, almost universally overlooked by the professed followers of Adam Smith. It is quite true that competition in all branches of industry should be unrestricted

by law, but only so long as free competition does not militate against the general good of the community. This principle is everywhere adopted by governments, and it is this which furnishes the excuse for protection—whether erroneously or not, it is not my object now to attempt to decide. Governments frequently conclude that it will be eventually for the benefit of the whole community if consumers are deprived for the time being of their undoubted right to buy in the cheapest markets. No one will deny that if protection be really a benefit to the general public, governments are quite justified in setting up counteracting influences to the freedom of competition. Whether Protection be so or not is of course another matter. In like manner the rights of private individuals are curtailed, and they are deprived of portions of their property, with compensations that may or may not be sufficient, in order that works may be prosecuted, such as railroads and canals, which are for the public good. When there is a famine in a country it is considered quite justifiable on the part of the government to forbid the exportation of grain; or when a war is contemplated which is supposed to be necessary, the exportation of ammunition and horses is forbidden. In innumerable cases are the rights property-holders and traders thus set aside, and no cry is raised of communism or of spoliation. The same rule applies with much greater force to property in land. Unlike other articles of merchandise, which are practically susceptible of infinite reproduction, land cannot be reproduced—not one inch, not one hair's-breadth can be added to it; like the air we breathe, it cannot be manufactured, and to claim unlimited rights of private property in it is even more absurd than if some one were to try and set up a monopoly of a portion of the atmosphere, on the plea that he had bought it with his money; for no matter how great the population of

the world, the atmosphere is practically inexhaustible, and there will always be enough for every one to breathe—in the present geological era at any rate—but not so with land. There is not enough land to entitle any individual to exercise unrestricted powers over any single piece of it. Every person who attempts to do so is nothing more or less than a robber. The land everywhere is common property, and the individuals who hold it, hold it only in trust for the public. There can no more exist property in land than there can exist property in human beings, and he who pays his money for land pays it simply for the privilege of holding it as a trust. To him belong absolutely the fruits of his labor and capital spent on the land, but nothing more, and if at any time it should be necessary, *for the good of the community*, to take his land from him, while paying him whatever compensation may be judged equitable, the government is not only justified in doing so, but is under an imperative obligation to do so, and if it does not, it is, in so far, a bad government.

Of course any other kind of property may also be taken, but the arguments in favor of such a course are much more powerful in the case of land. M. de Laveleye, the celebrated Belgian economist, in elucidating his theory that every man has a natural right to possess property in land, and that, consequently, there can be no such thing as absolute property in land for any one, speaks thus: * “We occupy an island where we live on the fruits of our labor; a shipwrecked person is cast on it. What is his right? Can he say, invoking the unanimous opinion of writers on jurisprudence: ‘You have occupied the land in virtue of your title as human beings, because property is the condition of liberty and of culture, a ne-

* La Théorie de la Propriété. Chapitre XXVI.

cessity of existence, a natural right; but I, also, am a human being; I have also a natural right to maintain. I may therefore occupy, in virtue of the same title as you, a corner of this land, in order that I may live on it from my labor.'

"If one does not admit that this claim is well founded, there is then nothing to do but to throw the shipwrecked man back into the sea, or, 'in justice,' says Malthus, 'to leave to nature the task of ridding the earth of him, there having been no place laid for him on it.'

"Certainly, if he has not the right to live from the fruits of his labor, he has still less right to live from the fruits of the labor of others, in virtue of a pretended right to assistance. Doubtless we can help him or give him a salaried employment, but this is an act of benevolence, it is not a juridical solution. If he cannot demand a portion of productive capital to live from by his labor, he has no rights at all. He who lets him die of hunger does not violate justice. Is it necessary to say that this solution, which seems to be that of the official school of jurists and economists, is contrary to all innate sentiments of justice, to natural law, to the primitive legislation of all peoples, and even to the principles of those who adopt it?"

Thus far M. de Laveleye. And certainly it seems reasonable that if a man has no right to cultivate a portion of the earth that he may live—if this right can be arbitrarily taken away from him, that the land he cultivates may be turned into a sheep-walk or a grouse preserve—then neither has he any right to receive state charity, and the government that taxes property-holders for poor-rates is committing a most outrageous piece of robbery. As Laveleye says, our only duty to the shipwrecked man is to throw him back into the sea; but this would be returning to the state of barbarism in which we

see wild beasts, for cattle, acting on the principle that those amongst them which cannot take care of themselves are useless and noxious, will horn to death a sick or wounded cow, and wolves will fall on and devour any one of their number that is injured. To follow the rules of the official school of political economists, therefore, man must go back to his primeval state, when he was without sense of right or wrong, and without religious feeling. I am not sure that the Sermon on the Mount would not prove a better guide to the professed aim of political economy, the greatest good of the greatest number, than the doctrine that, as it is only the fittest who survive, people must prove their claim to being the fittest to live by leaving all who are weaker than themselves to perish.

In Russia and Germany the principles formulated by Laveleye have been acted on, and in Russia the land has been partly, in Germany entirely, taken by the government from the great landed proprietors, and given to the tenants. In France the same process has been accomplished by a revolution, and the landed proprietors have received no compensation. The French revolution remains as a terrible example and warning to all landlords for ages to come. It is useless to talk contemptuously of the ignorant masses, of a brute majority, etc. The brute majority will always end by getting what it wants, and is therefore by no means to be despised by a helpless and equally ignorant aristocracy. If the brute majority cannot get what it wants by the suffrage, then it will get it by revolution. You may talk with indignation of the "low rabble" demanding as a right, what in your opinion they should only entreat as a boon. Nevertheless, if you, the educated upper classes, do not meet the rabble at least half-way in their demands, preposterous as they may seem to you, the rabble will overwhelm you at

last, and, strange to say, out of the ruins of your overthrow will rise up a new state of things, which succeeding generations may even consider a better one, just as the state of France, after the revolution, was in every respect superior to her state before the revolution.

All through history, it is the mob (so called) that really ends by winning. In the warfare of plebeian against patrician, it is the plebeian that, though often crushed, invariably scores the final victory. The blind instinct of the multitude, pushing onward and upward, often wrong, but much oftener right, is one of the most powerful of God's instruments of civilization for the world. It reminds the minority, which constitutes the upper classes, of what it would otherwise be only too glad to forget, that with the accidental privileges of greater education, greater intelligence, greater wealth, and so on, go stern duties,—that its wealth and its intelligence exist only in order to be employed for the good of those who are, accidentally also, less gifted with either one or the other; finally, that if it neglects to perform its duties, if it begins to fancy that its gifts are to be used for its own good alone, the great threatening majority everywhere around it will inflict terrible punishment on it. Well has the mob been christened King Mob. It is truculent and violent, like a raging torrent that has burst its bounds. At first it sweeps away everything it meets, but after a time, when its violence subsides, the earth is made all the more fertile and smiling for it. When the great conservative influence, which we may not inaptly christen King Log, has long been called upon in vain to reform an abuse, then King Mob rises in his might, and sweeps both the abuse and King Log away, and out of what seems universal wreck comes progress.

But the rough justice of King Mob is a last and terrible remedy; it is like the starvation cure in medicine, which

reduces a man to death's door in order to destroy as far as possible all the old diseased molecules of his body, and build him up a new and healthy body. Less tremendously radical ways of regenerating the political system should be tried first, and it is to be hoped that as liberal ideas become more extended, and the upper classes more enlightened, recourse to this remedy by a people will become less and less frequent. In Ireland, where the people are slow to rise, rebellion, like Ribbonism, will, we trust, be soon a thing of the past. But for this desirable end it is not the education of the lower classes that is needed in Ireland, but the education of the upper ones. Take two young men, both members of an Irish gentleman's family, send one to be educated in an English upper-class college, the other in an Irish upper-class college. The one who is educated in England stands a fair chance of coming home with his mind full of liberal principles, while the one educated in the Irish college will almost certainly return imbued with the narrowest Toryism. To the ordinary hostility between rich and poor is added in Ireland the animosity produced by the upper classes being of different blood and different religion, and by the long record of persecution and oppression which marks the relations between patrician and plebeian there for centuries past. With this intense narrow-mindedness on the part of the upper classes, and an intense sense of wrong on the part of the lower classes, it may seem difficult to see how rebellion is to be avoided for the future. Indeed, it may yet be that the unnatural bond between England and Ireland is to be severed by the sword, but until the chances of success are very great, it would seem that it is the duty of every lover of Ireland to try and prevent abortive risings, which bring each time untold misery upon the country. Vigorous constitutional agitation against abuses is perhaps the best method that can

be devised for keeping in check the fierce passions of the populace. Where this is interdicted, the smouldering fire of disaffection is always ready to leap into flames. In agitation it finds a safety-valve. The Irish are a patient race, and if their hopes can only be fully aroused that there is really a prospect of good to be obtained from constitutional action, they will be ready to give it a fair chance, and await results. Still, the words of O'Connor Power, member of Parliament for Mayo, were pregnant with meaning when he said, while addressing a monster tenant-right meeting, "It is better for the government to give way to the pressure of agitation, than to give way to the pressure of rebellion." To one or other of these forms of pressure every government in the world has always had eventually to yield, for we know the familiar axiom, and especially in Ireland have we realized its truth, that every government will be as bad as it dares be.

There is a story in the Scandinavian which tells how a certain king, named Frothi, once bade his two slaves grind him gold. They ground on and on for many years, giving him huge piles of treasure. At last they grew weary, and begged for rest. But the king was greedy, and bade them grind on. So, weary as they were, they continued to grind, till at last, instead of gold, an army of men poured out from the quern. These fell upon King Frothi and slew him.

* * * * * I said that I intended to show by some cases which took place not over two years ago, that the provision in Gladstone's Land Act for compensation for unexhausted improvements made not more than twenty years previously, is frequently quite futile. I will proceed to cite, in proof of this assertion, certain proceedings in a famous suit for libel, brought against a Mr. Sarsfield Casey, for censures made by him on the

conduct of an individual named Buckley, a land speculator, who had bought up from a land company a large property, called the Mitchelstown Estate, the greater part of which consisted of mountain and bog land, which had been entirely reclaimed by the tenants, without any assistance whatever from landlords. The work of reclamation had been a long and very difficult one, and had extended over several generations, during which the holdings had been handed down from father to son. The rents, as fixed by the last landlord who held the estate before it passed into the hands of the land company, were low, compared to what fertile land fetches in Ireland, but not at all low when compared to the real value of the land, which, spite of the fifty or sixty years' labors of reclamation spent on it, was still very barren, and not susceptible of being made more productive. It was such land as in England a farmer would pay a merely nominal rent for, and the rents actually paid for which in Ireland only left the tenant the usual bare subsistence, with which the Irish farmer is compelled to be satisfied. Any higher rent meant starvation or the work-house. On entering into possession of this estate, Mr. Buckley, who had bought it cheap from the land company, determined to get twelve or fifteen per cent. interest for his money, and sent down a person already notorious in such congenial tasks, named Patten Bridge, a former henchman of the infamous bankrupt, James Sadleir, to revalue the land, with the assistance of another "bird of a feather," named Walker. Patten Bridge's instructions were to raise the rents as high as possible in every case, and in valuing the land, only to take into account in the tenant's favor such improvements as had been made inside of five years previously! All other improvements were to be made the basis of a rise in rents. Of course, this was pure confis-

cation, and so Mr. Sarsfield Casey said. Bridge and Walker succeeded entirely to their own satisfaction, and the rents of the Mitchelstown tenantry, already poor and miserable to a frightful degree, from the fact that their former rents, low as they were, left them nothing that they could save over for years of bad harvests, were raised all round from fifty to five hundred per cent. On the tenants declaring their inability to pay, notices to quit were served on them. Here it will be seen how Gladstone's Land Act failed to compensate the tenants for the improvements which had been made both by them and their ancestors. To use the expression of the *Dublin Nation*, the land had virtually been created by the tenants; the improvements extended backward for nearly a century, and as they comprised the entire reclamation of the land, were still unexhausted, and never could be exhausted as long as the soil was kept under cultivation at all. The principle of compensation for unexhausted improvements made within twenty years before, was here clearly absurd. For the rest of the hardship and injustice attending this case, I will let some of the evidence given at the libel trial speak for itself. The report of the proceedings I have taken from the *Dublin Nation* of the 8th Dec., 1877, which, in its turn, quotes from the *Daily Express*, the *Freeman's Journal*, the *Irish Times*, etc., papers of various shades of politics.

Michael Regan, a comfortably clad man, but worn looking, in reply to Mr. Porter, deposed that he, and his father before him, had held 47 Irish acres of mountain land on the estate. They reclaimed it without help from the landlord. They had to blast rocks with gunpowder, and bury big stones, remove others, and get rid of the heather. There was a house on the holding which his father built, and rebuilt another. They got a little timber for one house from Mr. Brogden, who was formerly

agent. When there was no road, limestone had to be carried up in panniers on the horse's back. Some of the land was now fair enough, other parts of it were hard and rocky. Very bad black oats grew on the holding. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and ten children. They had potatoes, bad or good, stirabout,* and "everything that came next to hand that they could get." The old rent was £5 19s. 6d. It had been raised to £15 16s. 6d. He never agreed to pay it, because he was afraid he could not, and he told that to Mr. Bridge and to Mr. Buckley. He was under notice to quit now. Cross-examined by Mr. Heron.—He had a quarter of an acre of turnips last year, and an acre of bad meadow. He had six cows and six yearling heifers, and three calves. The yearling heifers were very small and bad.

Pat Kelly, examined by Mr. Roche, deposed—I have a farm at Kiltankan, containing 19½ Irish acres. I have been on the farm since I was born, and I am 55 years of age.

What sort of land was it when you first knew it?—A bad sort of land, as it is now. Half of it is in marsh, and the rest is poor, dry land. The nine acres or so are very wet. I have got oats out of the land, and potatoes we set, but we seldom have any potatoes. I only recollect twice in twenty years having had enough. I have three cows. The whole yield of butter is about four firkins. I have seven children. When Walker came I had a conversation with him. I brought him a letter from a neighboring parson, asking him to consider the poorness of the place, and not to raise the rent.

What conversation had you with Mr. Walker?—Well, I said, I supposed it was to raise the rent he was there,

* Equivalent to mush, made of an inferior kind of oatmeal, or of yellow Indian meal.

inasmuch as he came without my sending for him. All he said was, why should it not be raised, because the times were better now than some former times.

What did you say?—I said, sure it was easier for my father to pay the present rent than it was for me, and he asked me to show was it easier for my father to pay the rent in his day than it would be for me. I said the rise in labor now, and the want of fuel, and want of provisions, with me, were things that he had not to contend with at all, and that I had, and that was more than a match for the increase of a few firkins of butter. I said if he raised the rent, what would I do for the children.

What did he say to that?—He said, “Why did we get them?”

What did you say to that?—I said it was a question against nature. I am getting into debt every year.

The Lord Chief-Justice.—You are getting worse and worse, Mr. Roche. Do you work hard?—I do, myself and the children.

And yet you are getting into debt?—I am.

What was your old rent?—£12 8s. 6d.

What is the new rent?—£20 10s.

Is the farm worth the increased rent?—I am not sure to be able to pay the old rent at present prices and support my family. I cannot for the new rent and live on that farm.

Have you been served with notice to quit?—I have, with three of them, at different times. I got the first two or three years ago, and the second some time after that.

Has there been an ejection on these notices to quit?—No.

Did it expire in September just passed?—Yes, I would rather leave than pay the increase.

Cross-examined by Sergeant Armstrong.—My rent was never £20 7s. 6d. I own part of a house at Mitchels-

town, which I got through the death of a friend. I have laid out money on it, and I have given orders to an auctioneer to sell it, as I cannot keep it. I have a tenant in it; he is paying £16 a year. I laid money out lately on it to the extent of £30, but there is a mortgage on it. I have seven or eight hens, and some pigs. I get £3 4s. or £3 5s. per firkin for butter. I have four heifers, twenty bonnives, no store pigs, three sows, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres of oats, about two acres of potatoes, and five or six acres of meadowing. I never use fowls for myself, or anything else that is good.

Re-examined.—I am hopelessly in debt, and I cannot get out of it.

Denis Murphy, a tall, gaunt man, who gesticulated excitedly when giving his evidence, was next called and examined by Mr. Butt.

Are you a tenant on Mr. Buckley's estate?—I am.

How much land do you hold?—Mr. Bridge told me I held $10\frac{3}{4}$ acres.

What old rent did you pay?—At the time that the Land Company bought this property from the Right Hon. the Earl of Kingston, we were in unity and peace.

What rent did you pay to the company?—The company's agent, my lord, which was Mr. Langford Rea, Esquire, came in the year 1854, my lord, and gave me and my partner notices to quit. Well, that was a thunderbolt to me, because to the Right Hon. George, Earl of Kingston, I or my father never was one farthing in debt.

Well, what rent did he make you pay?—Because I was not able to stand law with him I submitted, and said he might take my case into his sympathy and humanity.

Just answer my questions, and then I will ask the Lord Chief Justice to let you say something for yourself. What did you pay to the Land Company?—£3 7s. 6d. per year.

Has Mr. Bridge asked you to pay more?—O goodness me, sir, he broke my neck and my back.

What rent is he asking from you?—£6 15s., double £3 7s. 6d, and must be paid, or the crowbar will be applied to the corner stone and level it, and leave me like a raven in the world.

Have you paid the increased rent?—Ah sure, God help me, I have, and neglected myself in every form, through food and raiment.

What effect has the payment of that increased rent had? You said something about your raiment and food?—I will tell you that.

Tell it *quietly*.—That when this rent was doubled upon me I knew the result, and I pawned my body coat, a frieze coat, my lord, in order to be up to the rent, and there it went from that day until this from me, in the year 1874, and I never saw it since.

You have never been able since to get your coat out of pawn?—No, sir; because when the term fixed by the pawn-office was passed, it was sold.

Was it to pay the increased rent that you pawned your coat?—It was just as I told you; I am on my oath.

Could you have paid that increased rent without pawning your coat?—I could not, unless I mortgaged the land.

How many have you in family?—I have my wife, and I had nine children. There are three of my children in America. When they saw this charge made upon me, they said that when they were in their youthful bloom, they would never suffer such destitution, and they advised me to go to America. But after the hardships and destitution to myself and my brother and my father, who is in the grave, bringing the limestone in a basket on his back, I would not. And there is not a man, my lord, in the world that is able to describe mountain land

like a man who toils on it, neither a Walker nor a Bridge, and it is a scrupulous thing, my lord, that any gentleman of decent appearance should see hungry and naked creatures (with great energy) because, my lord, I am as healthy as any man in the court-house, and my visage can show I am starving for want of food.

Since you agreed to pay that increased rent, have you yourself had sufficient food?—Upon my oath, I had nothing but Indian meal stirabout, and I would be very glad to subsist upon Swedish turnips, which it was never decreed by Almighty God a human creature should subsist on. After eating a bellyful of it, I would not be able to go ten perches through weakness.

Have your family been living on the same?—In part they have, and not as much as I have, because many is the journey and the toil and the hardship that I should go; but still and all my food was insipid and weak.

Do you mean to tell me that was the ordinary subsistence of your family for the last three years?—Indeed it was.

Had you ever a meal of meat?—Musha, God help me and my meat! I did not; I did not eat it at the last festival; that was in September. It is a doleful thing to tell you, I did not taste a bit of meat, because I had not money to buy it.

Has your wife been at service?—When I was put to this difficulty—surrounded, my lord—I said, “Well, after my father’s sweat and my own, God is good,” said I, “and now,” said I, “you may go for a year in service, in order that we may keep it, sooner than be turned away into the work-house, and while you are able to work, you can get better food there than in this farm.” She condescended, my lord, to my advice, and went into service.

Is she at service now?—She is at home in her own cabin.

What kind of a house have you ? how many rooms ?
—None but the one.

Is the roof a good one ?—It is, but the thatch is wretched, and reed is too dear, and my land don't grow corn.*

Is your land high up on the mountain ?—Oh then, it is so high and the cliffs and glens getting into it, that if you stayed in it and looked down, “Niagara megrims” would come into your head, and you would fall down.

You are a good way up the mountain ?—Oh, I am too far up.

You remember when your father took this land ?—No.

How long do you remember it ?—I remember it since the year 1821.

In what state was the land ?—Oh, dear knows ; with the exception of two fields he reclaimed, I saw heath that grew up to my knees.

I suppose you heard from your father who reclaimed the two fields ?—It was himself ; there is not a house or a home there, only just as there is on Mount Ararat.

Will you tell me how you reclaimed that land ?—To go to the limestone quarry that was on the lowland, and to fill, my lord, a little donkey car ; to fill about six crot ; to drive on till we began to get against the steep hill ; to unload a portion of it until we got to another cliff ; to unload a portion again, and in the long run you would not know what color was the horse, only white, like the day he was foaled, with sweat ; and upon my oath, there would not be more than one crot, when it reached the kiln, to reclaim this barren mountain. We had nothing but a spade and a pickaxe, and we had to get powder to blast the rocks. I would be willing to forfeit the ten acres and three quarters for the gentlemen of the jury to see the place I am living in.

* By “corn” is meant wheat.

Are there stones there?—Upon my oath, man, there are—stones bigger than the bench the Chief Justice is sitting on.

How did you do with the rocks?—A crowbar should raise them, and a stout man with an iron sledge in his hand, and the greatest bully of a man had enough to do to make quarters of three big rocks in a day, and indeed, my lord, it was not on Indian meal stirabout he could do it.

After having removed the stones, what did you do with the heath?—To dig it with a spade and turn it into the ground, to come then with the quick-lime burnt in the kiln, and to shake a little dust of that on it. Well, then, with a quantity of little manure, by pulling some heath, and laying it opposite the door of the barn, and then spreading it over the ground, * * * * * and so help me God, if you dug a sod of that stuff, and were strong enough to throw it over this great building, where it would fall it would be as stiff as when you cut it out of the farm.

How long should you work?—Dear knows, from the rising of the sun till the going down. * * * * *

Did you get any assistance from the landlord?—No, no more than you did.

Or from the company?—Ah, nonsense, no more than we got from God and our own industry.

You were not able to give it as much lime as it required?—Yes, that is it.

You say that your three children went to America?—Steered to America.

Was that in consequence of your condition by being made to pay the increased rent?—Sure it was, unless they went about the country with their spades on their shoulders, and now I ask you, who would give them hire?

Were you going to America yourself at the time?—No,

nor I won't to-day. I would sooner die where I am to-day. If I had the courage of a man, it would be better for me ; but now, when I am worn down, let me sink or swim. I have no chance now, while God leaves me the life. * * * * *

Eight tenants were next examined in succession. Johanna Fitzgerald, a poorly-clad woman with a child in her arms, swore she was not able to pay the old rent which had been raised from £2 14s. 4d. to £4 4s. She had no money to buy a drop of milk for her children, when leaving on the previous morning.

Patrick Burke deposed that he had got only one frieze coat for fifteen years, and that he had to pawn for 4s. ; he was not able to pay even the old rent, in consequence of which he ran into debt. Terence Murphy swore that he and his father reclaimed his holding ; he was not able to pay the increased rent ; he had always to buy food ; he had often sown oats which did not ripen at all. He had got a "red" ticket for medical relief. Thomas Kearney said his potatoes were no potatoes at all, for "they would fly out of his hands when he came to peel them," and he and his family had to live on yellow meal stirabout for nine months in the year. It was so cold on the mountain side that oats would not ripen, and was all chaff. He had not thrashed oats for twelve years ; he had to cut it green and throw it to the cows. He could not pay his new rent, which was £17 10s., the old being £5 14s. 6d. John Duggan was working at the reclamation of the farm when he was not nine years old ; drained his garden for seven years to prepare it for a crop ; remembered the former agent of the property attempted to reclaim it and failed ; had his rent raised from £2 11s. 8d. to £6 16s. ; he could not pay the old rent but for his father, who was in a foreign country. Patrick Kearney said when long ago he tilled a streak of his farm, "there

was a heap of stones the height of yourself, some of them three tons' weight, large and small ;" almost a bridge was made across the glen, such a heap of stones was thrown out ; the potatoes were so bad this year they were hardly worth digging ; goats in other places were as good as the cows we had ; he could hardly pay his old rent, £1 8s., not to talk of the new rent, £3 3s. 6d. James Maguire swore he got his farm, wild mountain, covered with stones and heather. Darby Naish said his father broke his heart reclaiming his holding ; he paid the new rent (having got 25s. reduction), rather than be thrown out or put into the work-house.

The next witness was Mr. Rearden, President of the Cork Farmers' Club. He was examined by Mr. Butt, Q. C.—I live about eight miles from the City of Cork, and have a good deal of land. I know a good deal about it. I am President of the Cork Farmers' Club.

I believe you were asked to visit the property of Mr. Buckley?—Yes, I did visit it.

Were you accompanied by any other person?—Yes, by Mr. O'Flaherty of Limerick, Mr. Byrne of Wallstown Castle, and some other gentlemen.

Where did you go to on Mr. Buckley's estate?—I went up to Skeheenarinka first, and took some notes of what I saw.

The Lord Chief Justice.—Is that recently?

Witness.—Not much more than a week ago.

Could you form a judgment how far Skeheenarinka is above the sea?—I don't know how many feet, but it is a rather high mountain. Some of Skeheenarinka is high up on the mountain, and some down below. I went up the hill first, and then right across.

As to the general character of the land, say what it appeared to you to be?—A pure mountain, almost worthless in my estimation for any agricultural purposes, without expending an immense lot of money on it.

Is it generally cultivated?—Attempts have been made at cultivating a considerable portion of it, and it is cultivated, some of it.

What was the state of that cultivation, as you saw it?—There were patches of potato field and some stubble.

Had you sufficient opportunity for judging of that soil?—Yes, we dug up some of it repeatedly.

What was the nature of that soil generally where you saw the patches of cultivation?—The surface appeared a little dark, but down lower it was a wretchedly bad subsoil, that required a good deal of time and care to bring it fit for growing any crop that would pay; it had been manured, of course.

How deep was the upper soil?—About six inches in some places, and more in other places, and in other places hardly anything at all.

And what was the subsoil generally?—Coarse sand, and in other places a tough marl.

What value for the purpose of agriculture would you set on such as you saw there?—I would not set any value on it; I think 1s. an acre would be as much as it would be worth. I don't mean the low portion or the foot of the mountain.

The Lord Chief Justice.—What would you say was the value of that which had been reclaimed?—I would set very little value on that, although considerable capital had been expended on it in the way of labor. 2s. an acre would be quite enough for it, in my opinion.

Mr. Butt.—Lower down, was the land a little better?—Yes.

What kind of soil was there lower down?—It was not so stony, and better in every way.

Did you inquire from the tenants what the old rents were?—I did.

Assuming that they told you truly, was the old rent the value of it?—Quite enough in my estimate.

Examination continued.—I inquired from about twenty tenants. I only saw four or five cattle there. I never saw tenants that had less cattle, except one farm that had twelve cows on it, which we did not visit. I only saw six cows on our journey across Skeheenarinka, and they were miserable small things. The land would never feed good cattle.

Did you observe the character of the houses of the people?—I did; they were the most miserable buildings I ever saw. They were hardly fit to call them even houses itself. I saw some built of mud, but whether of mud or of stone, they were of the same bad character.

Will you give a description of the interior of any one house you examined?—The second house that I went into, the woman was examined on the table here yesterday—Johanna Fitzgerald. There was a wretched earthen floor on it, with water oozing down from the walls through the bad thatch, and a couple of beds at the end of a dark, dingy room, and there was not a single bit of a blanket, but some filthy canvas. You would go up to your ankles almost in the damp earthen floor.

Were you in a house where you found a man ill of pleurisy?—Yes, that was on Barnahoun. There was a house of another widow there, and it was just as bad a house. The rain was coming down in twenty parts, and the walls quite black with the oozing of the rain from the rotten thatch. I went into fifteen or sixteen houses on Skeheenarinka.

And generally they were all in as bad a condition as these two houses?—The most of them were all bad, but three or four particularly bad. If they were down in the neighborhood of Cork, where I live, the relieving officer or the sanitary officer would come there

and immediately order the people to go out of them. * * * I examined Mrs. Rock's holding. Her husband died. She had three children, and she showed me some oats that grew there. They were no good. She had seven acres, and three acres of it tilled. 18s. was the old rent. The new rent, she told me, was £2 4s.

Now as to Lawrence Carroll?—I went into that house; he has five children. Himself and his son work for Mr. Bridge, and there was not a worse house in Skeheenarinka than that.

Was that house fit for human habitation?—No.

Was it fit for the habitation of a beast?—It was not. You would not put a beast into it. A cow would be just as well off outside.

What state was it in?—Dropping rain down everywhere; holes in the roof, and the floor of it muddy and filthy; sticks propping up the roof in every direction.

Did you see any bedding in the house?—I did; an apology for clothing. It was old sacks and rags of every description. In fact, it was hard to tell what they were.

Witness then referred to the house of Richard Leonard, who, he was told, was sick in bed. The door was shut. It was a little house about six feet high, without a single window in any part of it. Examined the farm of Thomas Leonard sufficiently to say that the old rent of £2 6s. 6d. was quite enough for it. He said the same of the farm of James O'Neil, whose rent was increased from 28s. to £2 16s.; Terence Murphy from £3 7s. 6d. to £6 15s. * * *

Generally speaking, going over Skeheenarinka, wherever you did ascertain the old rents, did you think that rent a fair one, as between landlord and tenant?—I did.

Generally, from your observation of the tenants on Skeheenarinka, were they in a thriving and prosperous

condition?—No, they were all very badly off. They had neither cows nor horses.

In what condition did the tenants in Barnahoun appear to be?—Worse than at the other place; if possible the houses were worse.

Tell me some of the houses that struck you most particularly.—There was the house of a farmer named J. Creagh. There were ten children in this house, and the father was ill of pleurisy; and I never saw any house yet (and I have seen bad houses of every type since the famine years)—I never saw anything to compare with this house. There were at least a dozen holes in the roof, and there were as many pools of water on the floor. The roof was, in fact, worse in the bedroom than in the kitchen. The father was sitting squatted over a few little clods of turf.

Did you see a bed in the house?—I did; it was a handful of rags. (Witness recognized as a correct representation of the house a photograph that was handed in.)

I suppose you don't think that was a very good place for a man to recover from a pleurisy?—I think it was a shame and a disgrace to have people inside that house at all. I noticed also the house of David Hennessy, who had five children, and whose rent was raised from £2 to £4 5s. There were two rooms, one a small bedroom, which answered as a dairy and a bedroom. This room was about 11 feet by 9.

Was that house fit for habitation?—It was better than other houses that I saw. I went to another house of a man named Carey, and as soon as I got inside I was near being thrown down. I stepped into a huge pool of water—it was so dark I did not see it. There was a dam made across inside to keep the water from extinguishing the fire. I observed the roof, and if it is not down since it

must have been additionally propped. It was propped in every direction, and the chimney all cracked.

How many were living in it?—I did not see father or mother; we met a bailiff there near the door.

What was the bailiff doing?—He was dogging us all about that townland. We could not see some of the tenants to get any information from them.

Do you see that man in court?—There he is (pointing to a bailiff who stood behind Mr. Brady).

Did he go before you into some of these houses?—He did.

And were you denied admittance to some of the houses where he had been before you?—We were not denied admittance, but the people would rather we would not come in, evidently.

Was the appearance of the tenantry that of well-fed, prosperous people, or the contrary?—They had a starved emaciated appearance in almost every place that we went to.

Did you see anybody that looked well fed?—I believe the bailiff was the best fed man I saw on the estate.

Mr. O'Flaherty was examined, and his evidence corroborated that of the previous witness in every particular.

Dr. W. F. Fenton, dispensary doctor at Clogheen, deposed that a good many of the tenants received from him medical relief. Edmund Dorney, a tenant, swore his wife died in the work-house, and that he had been there himself when he fell ill. He paid the new rent through fear of having to go there again. A statement to the same effect was made by Richard Condon, who also said that out of an acre of oats he got only a stoneweight of grain. James Phelan said he was twenty years building his house, "and," said he, at the close of his examination, "if I was talking for a month I could not explain my hardship and my misery." Mr. J. Byrne, J. P.,

President of the Mallow Farmers' Club, corroborated the evidence of Messrs. O'Flaherty and Rearden.

We extract the following passages from his evidence as reported in the *Freeman*:

You had an opportunity of seeing the unreclaimed land in its original state, and the reclaimed?—I had.

What value would you put upon expended in reclaiming that land?—£20 the Irish acre, at least.

I ought to have asked you before, but I believe you are yourself an extensive farmer?—Yes; I hold 500 acres.

If you were now to set about bringing that unreclaimed land into the state of the reclaimed, do you think it would cost you £20 an acre?—I do.

Now as to the reclaimed land, taking it just as it is, if you were letting it fairly, as between landlord and tenant, in its present condition—I don't want you to take tenant's improvements into account—but if it were free of everything, what value would you put upon it?—From 5s. to 6s. an acre.

Generally, now, on that townland, did you make any remark about the general appearance of the people living on it?—They seemed to be a very broken-hearted people. I heard nothing there but wails and lamentations.

I was asking you about their personal appearance.—They were all a very wretched-looking lot of people, apparently very badly fed, and badly clothed and cared for.

I believe that you went to a townland called Glenna-curry, and saw Thomas Carey's house there?—I did. He has one of the best-looking houses in that neighborhood.

Did you come upon them while they were at dinner?—We did. They were preparing a lot of Indian meal stir-about for dinner.

Did you see any turnips there?—I saw, on the newly reclaimed portion of the land, what they intended to be

a crop of turnips, and I suppose a hundred acres of the turnips I saw would not be worth 6*d.*, I should fancy. I don't know how to put any value at all upon them. They were a complete failure. They hardly budded out at all.

What was the character of this land before it was reclaimed?—I saw portions of it in process of reclamation. A hundred loads of stones would have to be taken off each acre of land that was to be reclaimed—several hundred loads. I saw him reclaiming a portion of it.

How thick were the stones?—So thick that you could see no soil between them, just like a regular heap of stones.

What would it cost to reclaim an acre of that ground?—I should say £30.

Did you, in any of these townlands, examine the depth of the soil?—Yes; we dug sods in several fields. In Cooladerry there were from eight to ten inches of soil.

In Skeheenarinka what was the deepest?—In the unreclaimed portion there was nothing that I could call soil, only a desert; but in the reclaimed portion there were four or five inches of soil.

Taking the pasture you saw there, if one head of cattle was put on the pasture, do you think it would improve £5 in the year?—I know well it would not.

How much would it improve?—Perhaps the half of that.

What cattle would each acre of that reclaimed pasture feed?—I should say it would take six or seven acres to feed a dairy cow winter and summer.

The Lord Chief-Justice.—Is that your evidence: six or seven acres of the reclaimed portion? Witness.—Yes, my lord.

Mr. Butt.—I suppose it is not good pasture?—Very bad.

Cross-examination failed to break down any of the evidence, which I have given somewhat *in extenso* (omitting, however, an immense deal of corroborative evidence). I close the pitiful details with a sense of relief. I have given them because most Americans read no Irish papers and few English ones, and their knowledge of Irish affairs is taken wholly from the frequently mendacious cables which are sent from London to the American newspapers. The state of things described at this trial is only a sample of what exists, more or less, all over Ireland, and of which I have myself frequently been an eye-witness. Brought up amongst Anglo-Irish Tories, as I had been, and with my mind filled with the bluest Tory principles, nothing less than the constant spectacle of tyranny and cold-blooded heartlessness on one side, and of suffering and degradation on the other, to which it was impossible to blind myself, which would not be thrust aside for all my prejudices of education, would have sufficed to arouse me gradually to a true view of how the case stood between landlord and tenant, between rich and poor, between Protestant and Catholic; in Ireland. Many and many a time has my blood boiled with an indignation all the fiercer because it was impotent, at the wrongs I have seen done around me by educated gentlemen and ladies, who looked upon the peasants that had been delivered over helpless into their hands, as so many brute beasts, to be made slaves of or exterminated. A landlord could not indeed flog his tenants to death in Ireland (though I have myself seen brutal blows inflicted on some cowering, half-clad wretch, by the man who virtually owned him, body and soul), but, with this exception, our Irish peasantry have been no whit better off than the negro slaves in Cuba and America. The landlord belonged to the conquering race, and the laws of the country to which the conquering race belonged gave the landlord, and still give him, every

power over his tenant short of direct murder, NOT short of indirect murder. Any one who says that I exaggerate in thus writing, either has never lived in Ireland, or has allowed his eyes to be closed by class prejudice. It needs but to draw the contrast between the Irishman on American soil, standing up erect in an independence which sometimes becomes aggressive, and the Irishman at home, shivering with his hat off in a pouring rain, with downcast look and submissive speech before his tyrant, as I have seen him over and over again, till my heart has sickened at it, to see how the manhood has been crushed out of him by his long slavery to want.

The ablest authorities have come to the conclusion that there is but one remedy for this special form of Ireland's misery. It is the establishment of a peasant proprietary. Stein and Hardenberg considered that it was the only remedy for a similar state of things in Germany, and time has shown how right they were. When Gladstone's Land Act was passed, it was thought that what are called the Bright clauses in it, providing for the extension of government aid to those tenants who wished to buy their land, would gradually lead to the establishment of a large body of peasant proprietors, similar to the English yeomanry of former times, all over the country. Unfortunately these clauses have turned out a delusion and a snare. Landlords, following their old traditions, prefer selling their estates to one person, rather than to many. Some time ago, a large estate called the Harene estate, was put up for sale, and the tenants, who happened to be a little more comfortably off than usual, made a bid for it, exceeding by £15,000 any previous bid. Instead of accepting their bid, however, the trustee, for reasons best known to himself, handed over the estate to a land speculator, with whom he had made a private bargain, at a lower price than that offered by the tenants. The lat-

ter, thinking the law was on their side, and anxious to escape the danger threatened them by falling into the hands of a greedy speculator, who, they knew, would inevitably repeat in their case the performances of Mr. Buckley and Mr. Bridge on the Mitchelstown estate, brought a lawsuit to compel the trustee to give them the estate, as being the highest bidders. The case was at first decided in their favor; this decision was reversed by the Irish Court of Appeals, and the matter being finally carried before the House of Lords, the decision of the Court of Appeals was confirmed, and the tenantry, in addition, mulcted in heavy costs. It may seem strange that a man should go to so much trouble in order to get a smaller sum of money for a property than he could otherwise have done, but it shows just what the prejudice against splitting up an estate will do. In this case, however, the private bargain between the trustee and the speculator, the details of which did not appear, must be taken into consideration. It shows that, owing to one cause or another, the Bright clauses in the Land Act should have been made compulsory on the landlord or trustee, other things being equal, in order to do any good. As things stand, these clauses are altogether ineffectual, and some far more radical reformation in the land system will be the only one that the peasantry will now be satisfied with. Their determination is shown by the attitude of passive resistance that they have taken upon the rent question. It is in fact the only attitude they can take up with any hope of benefit to themselves, and one of its secondary good results will be, that there will be far less bloodshed produced by it than by any other methods the Irish peasantry have in their desperation adopted in former times of distress. Were the times more prosperous, or were the raising of cattle in Ireland still as lucrative as it used to be, the refusal of the tenants to pay

exorbitant rents would of course be followed by wholesale evictions. That method cannot now be adopted by the landlords. It no longer pays to raise cattle in Ireland, and the landlords will get more by accepting the reduced rents the tenants have offered to pay, than by depopulating their estates, as they did in the good old times. Evictions, therefore, the great source of bloodshed hitherto, will be fewer than they ever were, and the landlords, met by this stone wall of passive opposition, and being in a sense at the mercy of their tenants—relatively, that is, to other happier years for landlords—will be forced to yield. But, as many of them have their estates so heavily encumbered by their own or their parents' extravagance that they cannot pay the fixed charges on their property if they take the reduced rent, these landlords will be eager to sell. It will no longer be considered a desirable thing to be a landlord. And here comes in the first ray of light that points to the way to Ireland's salvation. The landlord interest rules, and is likely to rule for many years yet, in the House of Commons. In a year or two the landlords will see that their best interest lies in selling their land to the Government. Once this truth has become firmly impressed on the landlord brain, it will be but a short step to passing a bill through Parliament for raising a loan to buy up the land in Ireland. Such a loan could be raised with the greatest ease. The purchase of the whole of Ireland would cost but little more than two or three of those little wars which England so delights in. The money could be advanced to the tenants at four per cent., and interest and installments would be cheerfully paid, for though the greatest pinching and saving might be necessary for a few years, there is no pinching that would not seem easy and delightful to the peasant, spurred on by the hope of becoming a proprietor.

I have not sketched too roseate a prospect. Some years ago some of the lands of the Irish Church were sold by the Government to the tenants occupying them, whereby four thousand farmers were made proprietors *in futuro*, and through the misery and hardship of the last three years, these tenants have all readily paid their interest and their installments. They have an object to pinch and suffer for. The tenant-at-will has none.

Fixity of tenure, at fair rents settled by arbitration, was a favorite scheme with that able statesman, Dr. Isaac Butt, and a bill to that effect has been brought forward by the Irish members year after year in Parliament. It has this much to be said for it (and that is a great deal), that such a system, while by no means crushing the evil of land monopoly, or providing a radical remedy for the destitution in Ireland, might still enable an increased number of farmers to lay by something every year, and thus constitute the nucleus for a fund which might, after many years, put them in some sort of position to purchase their holdings. The very slow and gradual improvement it might cause, combined with the disgust of the landlords at finding their power so much curtailed, and their consequent increased willingness to part with their estates, would probably operate so as to bring about finally the establishment of a peasant proprietary; but the process would take too long. We need a remedy that works more quickly than this—need it not only because the tenants are miserable, though this is in itself a sufficient reason, for if one important section of a community is sick, the community itself cannot be in a healthy state, but because the condition of the whole nation imperatively requires it. Every single man, woman, and child in a country is vitally interested in the question as to whether the laws of that country are such as allow the soil to be cultivated in the most pro-

ductive manner. The great game preserves and private parks of the aristocracy are directly injurious to every man, woman, and child in the land, for they cut off so much soil that should be used in producing food or raw material for manufactures. The immense quantity of waste lands are directly injurious for the same reason, and so long as the laws are such as to render it unprofitable to the farmer to reclaim these lands, by not securing to him the fruits of his industry, so long will those lands not be reclaimed, for the Irish landlords themselves make no attempts at reclamation. Again, so long as the highest incentive to industry, the magic influence of proprietorship, is withdrawn from the cultivator, so long will the ground not be cultivated in the best way, nor with the greatest painstaking; so long, therefore, will it be less productive than it ought to be. All these conditions are found in their most aggravated forms in Ireland, and as they keep the farming or laboring classes, the great buying classes, in poverty, so do they necessarily hurt and impoverish all the other producing classes. The farmer who can make no profits from his farm, and who has no standard of comfort, and the laborer to whom he pays starvation wages, are both unable to buy from the manufacturer, and manufactures of all kinds decline. There is no market for anything, prices fall, and we see what has been the scandal of the last few years, landlords raising their rents in the face of a continued fall in the price of agricultural produce. As, however, the tenants cannot go on paying these rents, the general poverty soon reacts on the landlords also, and hence the shrieks of the landlord class, now heard from one end to the other of Ireland. All, therefore, inevitably become poor together, and as there is no road to improvement open, the depression grows worse and worse, till some such crisis as a famine, by causing tremendous mortality and

wholesale emigration, depopulates the country, and apparently makes things a little better for the survivors. Such a momentary gleam, however, is unreal, being founded on what can never be anything but a misfortune to any country, viz., depopulation. The politico-economical quacks of the present day prescribe emigration in much the same way as the medical quacks used to prescribe blood-letting. It is of course possible that there may be a plethora of population in a country, though China is about the only nation in which we see an apparent plethora, and that would seem to be chiefly the effect of the Chinese government's refusal to develop the internal resources of the country; but in the whole history of Ireland there never has been any excess of population. 8,000,000 of inhabitants has been her highest total, while, if the land were properly cultivated, and if manufacturing industries were flourishing, she could support with ease from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000. Meanwhile emigration, like blood-letting, produces an apparent temporary improvement, soon followed by a worse state of things than ever. The nation, as its life-blood oozes slowly away from it, becomes exhausted and despairing. Only one thing remains alive forever, and that is the spirit of hatred and rebellion.

Nevertheless, the prospect before Ireland, though dark, is not hopeless. The remedies for her ills are well known; the first and most pressing one needed is the abolition of landlordism. On every side the indications point to a speedier attainment of this goal than is generally supposed. The landlords themselves know it, and while what they professed to dread is tenant-right, what they dread in their hearts is a far more sweeping change. This dread, however, will not always exist in their minds. The day will come when they will be only too glad to take a fair compensation for their lands, and go. If they

quit the country on which they have lived—the majority of them—as parasites, the country will not miss them, but if they should decide to remain, it will be perforce as better citizens than before, for with the breaking up of the landlord power in Ireland; the ascendancy of the English colony there will also be broken up, and as a secondary, but necessary consequence, the greater part of the power of the English government for evil. The representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament may still continue inadequate, Ireland having now only 105 members in a Parliament of 658, though her population is one fifth that of England and Scotland; an immense number of property holders may still remain disfranchised, owing to the refusal of the English to concede to Ireland the household franchise they themselves enjoy; the Government may still withhold the endowments for education which it owes as a simple debt to the Catholics whom England so long kept by law in ignorance and poverty. Home Rule may still be a work for years of painful labor to accomplish, but the corner stone of English sovereignty in Ireland will have been removed, and if the rest of the edifice follows in due time, it will certainly not involve Ireland in ruin. When that time comes, Ireland will be able to say to England, “I was once your dupe, your victim and your slave; you said we were united, but we were united as the prisoner is to the wall to which he is chained: I am now your equal, and therefore I can forgive past wrongs, and be your friend.” Till Ireland can say this, there is no friendship possible between her and England; no union by coercion between two nations can ever be anything but a delusion.

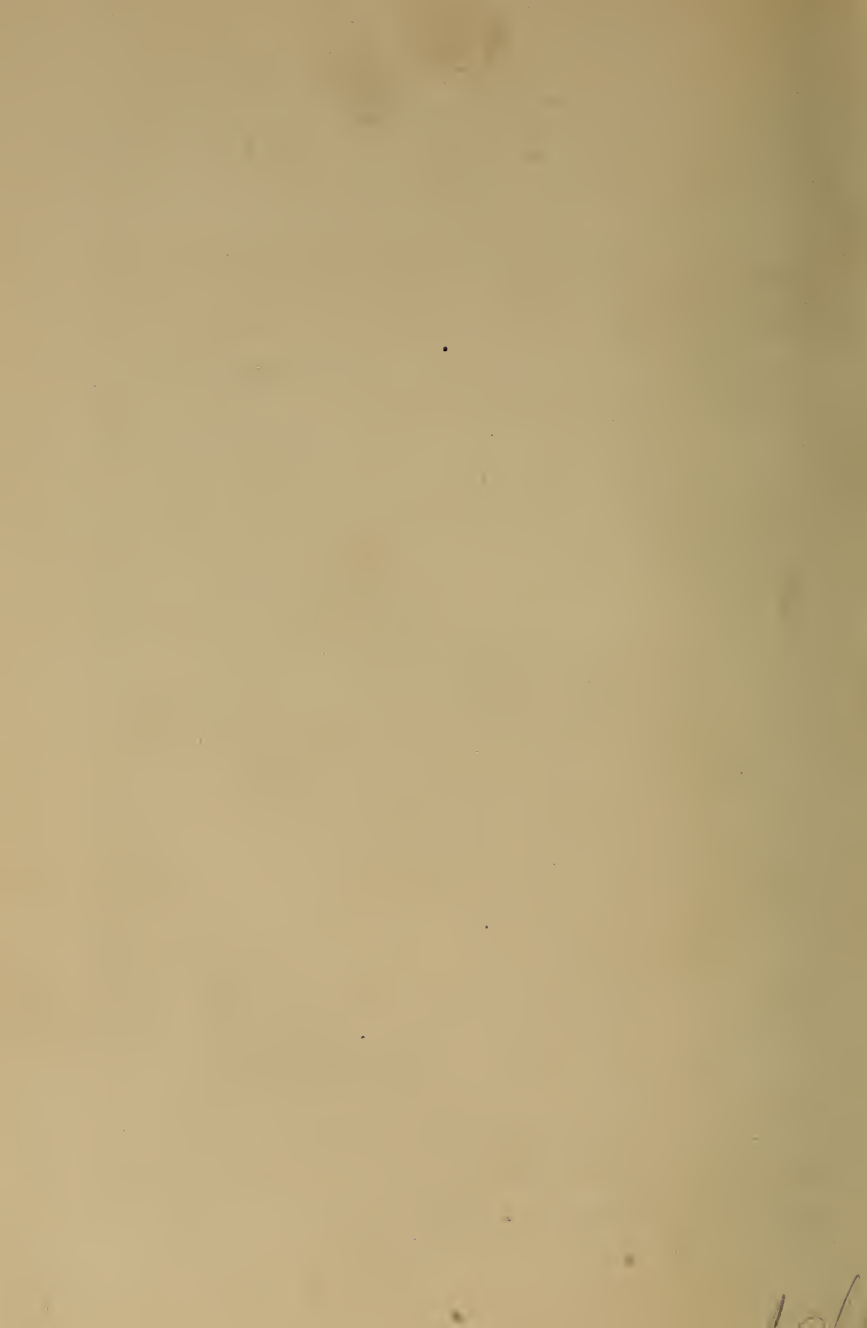
One word before I finish I would say to America. I would ask her to remember the words of Benjamin Franklin: “I found the people of Ireland disposed to be friends of America, in which I endeavored to confirm

them, with the expectation that our growing weight might in time be thrown into their scale, and justice be obtained for them likewise." Franklin was wiser in his generation than the Know-Nothings and toadies of England of the present day. I have heard many Americans say, "Yes, we used to sympathize with Ireland, but since we have had a rebellion of our own, and suppressed it, we have no longer any sympathy with rebelliously inclined people." It would seem almost superfluous to point out to any person of intelligence the radical difference between the rebellion of the South against the central government of the United States, and the rebellions of Ireland against England. Without entering at all into the question of the merits of America's civil war, it should yet be remembered, that the South endeavored to secede from a Union into which it had voluntarily entered, and to shake off an authority which it had itself helped to establish, and which it had always, up to that time, recognized. At no period of her history, on the other hand, did Ireland voluntarily unite herself with England. She was conquered by force of arms, and the English power is to this day kept up by a large military garrison. The consent of the people themselves was never asked to any union, and to this day the members returned by Ireland to the Imperial Parliament are outvoted in everything, and can only obtain the most trifling concessions by a system of the most determined obstruction. It is thus evident that there is no analogy whatever between the Southern rebel and the Irish one. The Southerners fought against their own government as the Puritans did in the time of Charles the First, and as the American colonists did in 1776; the Irish fought against a foreign government, imposed on them by force. The real fact is, however, that America is now so far away from her own days of suffering and feebleness, her

own bitter struggle against oppression has become so much a mere matter of ancient history with her, that she has forgotten how sweet sympathy seemed to her in those days. Not in those days did she scornfully reject friendly and sympathetic addresses from other nations, at the bidding of the English ambassador. Rebellion seemed righteous enough to her then, though it was against her own mother country. Then she was grateful for the boon of a few kind words. Irishmen led her armies to the field, fulminated against England in her legislative assemblies, and affixed their names to her Declaration of Independence. But the splendid republican heat of those days has cooled down. Patriotic Americans are not ashamed to wish out loud for a monarchy and an aristocracy. There is a class growing up, which if it could only constitute itself into a titled nobility, would throw overboard every republican principle that their forefathers have inscribed with their blood on the pages of American history. It may yet turn out that it is not hoodlums, greenbackers, or communists that will be the worst enemies of the republic, but those who ought to be its bulwarks—the respectable and monied classes. Not Butler, or Kearney, or Justus Schwab are the dangerous men to this republic, but the people who think themselves too good for a republic at all. The ever increasing sharpness of class distinctions, and the pretensions of the so-called “old families” in a country only two hundred years old, on the one hand,—with those of the wealthy shoddies on the other—these two classes, each trying to conjure themselves into an aristocracy, to the exclusion of the only people who should, in a republic, be entitled to pre-eminence of position—the people of the best conduct and highest intelligence—these things are signs that America has entered on a new stage in the history of her development. She is passing through a period of involution instead of evo-

lution. But such involution can only be temporary ; progress is eternal, and in a great nation like this, the inevitable reaction against monarchical and oligarchical ideas will one day set in, and America will return to her first love. Communism and Feudalism, these two extremes that seem so opposed to each other, yet, in reality, call each other into existence, will die out together, as twin relics of barbarism.

Meanwhile to the men and women who form the backbone of this country—those who cling to the stern old political faith of Milton and Hampden, of Patrick Henry and George Washington—I appeal for sympathy for my prostrate country. To them I look for right judgment and for cheering words to the men who are conducting our life and death struggle inside and outside the walls of Westminster. Words are but little to ask, but words from a power like America resound all over the world, and can plead, trumpet-tongued, for a down-trodden cause. Many a time when I have read churlish words of ridicule or abuse written against us by an American pen, I have said, And thou too, Brutus? England exults when she sees the nation, which from its history should be our greatest friend, stand in the ranks of those who rail at us. One of these days, however, our long agony will be ended. We shall be a free and prosperous nation, for on the road on which we have set our feet, we shall not turn back. Bloodlessly, we trust and believe, but in some way or other we mean to wrest our national autonomy from the grasp of the robber. Doubtless we shall then have sympathy and friendship “ga-lore” extended to us, but our gratitude and our love will be to those who have spoken kindly things to us now, or who have even abstained from reviling us. It will be an opportunity for nobleness lost to the greatest nation that has ever existed, if it refuses us now the easy favor of a little charitable speech.



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